

Universal Oil Products -
Chemical Division

SITE DESCRIPTION

Universal Oil Products Chemical Division is an inactive specialty chemicals manufacturing facility located in East Rutherford, Bergen County, New Jersey. The plant, razed in 1980 by the company, was located on a relatively flat 85 acre tract of land situated in the coastal wetland management area of the Hackensack River Basin. The site is bordered on the southeast by Berry's Creek with one of its tributaries, Ackerman's Creek, passing through it. Berry's Creek joins the Hackensack River about 3.5 miles downstream. Based upon manifest records, it is estimated that over 4.5 million gallons of waste solvents and solid chemical wastes were dumped into one (1) of two (2) unlined lagoons located on the eastern part of the property. Findings, resulting from the site inspections and an air and water testing program, revealed product contamination of surface and ground waters as well as a large quantity of soils. The lagoons have been filled in, however, contaminated soils are still present. The ground water aquifer is used by industry as process cooling water and also serves as a drinking water supply for residents of Wallington Township. Nearby surface waters are used for recreation.

RESPONSE AND REMEDIAL ACTIONS

A site inspection was made by the NJDEP on July 2, 1979. Findings revealed several hazardous chemical spills including an overflowing chemical sewer. After subsequent investigations where soil borings and surface water and monitoring well samples were taken, it was discovered that organic chemical concentrations were sufficient to prompt enforcement actions. Incidents of dead fish in Berry's Creek have been reported, however, other suspected sources of contamination may have contributed to the kill. Future actions will include further testing in order to develop a cost efficient cleanup program.

ENFORCEMENT ACTIONS

On March 27, 1980, the NJDEP issued an Administrative Order and penalty assessment in violation of UOP's NPDES permit, failure to contain and remove chemical spills from the plant premises, and failure to observe non-compliance notification requirements. On July 27, 1982, an Administrative Order and Directive Letter was issued to UOP in violation of the Spill Compensation and Control Act. Future actions would be geared toward site cleanup.